Kidnapping and detention of MLAs in Meghalaya

SHRI G. G. SWELL (Meghalaya): Sir, I would crave the indulgence of Mr. Jacob, the Minister of State for Home Affairs because my special mention relates to his Ministry.

A piquant and explosive situation has arisen in Meghalaya.

Meghalaya is a small State in the North-East. That is an insurgency-bound and insurgency-prone area. Until today Meghalaya has been a kind of an Island of peace, tranquillity and stability. Meghalaya State Assembly has a strengthen of 60 Members and at present it has an effective strength of 58 Members. In the elections that were held in 1988, no single party got majority. It has always been ruled by coalitions. The first coalition was the United Meghalaya Parliamentary Front, of which the main leader was the Congress Party. After that there was the another coalition of regional parties. The Meghalaya United Parliamentary Party has been ruling the State for the last one year and a half, but the Congress has never been able to reconcile itself to the loss of power and has been trying all the time to get people to come over to its side and to engineer to topple the State Governments. It went on like that but it did succeed. Yesterday they went beyond all limits. Three Members of the Meghalaya United Parliamentary Party were kidnapped and taken forcibly and kept under forcible detention. I am sorry to say that the person who has been named in this regard is no other than the Speaker of the Meghalaya Assembly. Incidentally, this gentleman on account of his personal ambitions was suspended by the Congress some time ago, but they took him back and now he is doing all these things. The Chief Minister of Meghalaya in order to resolve this stalemate has convened or has asked the Governor to convene a special Session of the Legislative Assembly on the 7th, i.e. only four days from today, so as to give the Members, including these Members, who have been forcibly detained, a chance to come to the House to make their statements and to make their decisions. Now, my request to Mr. Jacob is that he would kindly do certain things. Because now it is a law and order question and some people have been kidnapped and forcibly detained, people are agitated. There is an agitation for raiding the house where these people are being forcibly detained. May be the State Government will have to ask the police to get them out. So, I want Mr. Jacob to do a number of things. One, he should tell the Governor not to precipitate anything, but wait for the session of the Assembly, which is only four days away, so that the Assembly can take a decision as to who has the majority. Second, he should ask the Governor to use his good offices to see that these people, who have been forcibly detained, are released so that the democratic process will have its due course. This is all that I want to say.

SHRI RAJ MOHAN GANDHI (Uttar Pradesh): May I add on the very important points made by Prof. Swell? Mr. Minister, I hope you are listening to this. This is very important, Mr. Jacob. I am making this serious statement that at 3.30 a.m. on July 30, in predown darkness several Congress (I) MLAs attacked the residence of the Deputy Speaker at Shillong, the Capital of Meghalaya, in a bid to kidnap him, but the bid was foiled. Second, Prof. Swell has spoken about three MLAs being held incommunicado. The wife of at least one of them, Mrs. Kharkhongor has filed an FIR regarding the disappearance of her husband. Third, in a very strange circumstance on July 26, from the residence of the Speaker, who occupies the Chair in Meghalaya—you are occupying here the Chair, Mr. Vice-Chairman,—from his residence, the Speaker announced that he has been declared the leader of the Congress Legislature party.

1.00 P.M.

Money is being offered to induce defections. There are reports that visits by Congress (I) bigwigs are likely in the next one or two days to clinch the matter. Therefore, through you, and on behalf of the entire Opposition, I believe, I urge the Government and the Prime Minister to instruct that these proceedings are halted; and to assure the House and the nation that the Central Government will not countenance or encourage unconstitutional or undemocratic, anti-federal and anti-national proceedings of this kind.

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY): Mr. Vice-Chairman, while associating myself with the views and sentiments expressed by both Prof. Swell and Mr. Raj Mohan Gandhi, I would like to make a request to the hon. Minister and through you to the Prime Minister that these things may be nipped in the bud. We are getting back to the old ways of destabilising non-Congress (I) Governments. We have reason to believe that these efforts in Meghalaya are being made with the blessings of those who are in power in Delhi. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): Already over. I cannot permit any Member. I understand that Mr. Mishraji, Mr. Sukomal Sen, Mr. Yadavji, Mr. Ram Awadhesh Singh and a few other Members whose names are here can associate with the sentiments expressed by Mr. Swell...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA (Uttar Pradesh): Mr. Jacob, are you reacting?

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Pondicherry): Why should he react to a special mention?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M. M. JACOB): I am not reacting. ... *(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI M. A. BABY): The House stands adjourned till 2.30 P.M.

The House then adjourned for lunch at two minutes past one of the clock.

The House reassembled after lunch at thirty-three minutes past two of the clock,

The Vice-Chairman (Shri Bhaskar Annaji Masodkar) in the Chair.

RESOLUTION RE. URGENT NEED TO AMEND EXISTING ELECTION LAWS—Contd.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): We will continue with the Private Members' Resolutions. Shri Yashwant Sinha. He has not finished. But he is not there.

SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: (Uttar Pradesh): He has gone to Muscat.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI BHASKAR ANNAJI MASODKAR): Dr. Sivaji.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, malpractices in elections are a problem and the problem is getting aggravated day by day. All the political parties, the various Governments in power in the various States and newspapers, all of them, are contributing to the deterioration in standards in the conduct of elections. It is very unfortunate that all the political parties are inducting caste and communal politics into elections. Nowhere else and never the election result is decided on the basis of caste and never a particular caste votes in toto only for a candidate from that particular caste. The high commands of all the political parties, while announcing their lists of candidates for the various elections, say that they have given so many seats to Brahmins, so many to Thakurs and so many to Jats. The system is getting on like that. All the political parties are contributing to this and candidates are fielded on the basis of caste.Sir, we are aware, since representative elections have been introduced in this country, the elections results are never decided by known caste lines and known communal lines. When it is decided by such an emotional issue and not on the basis of the problems facing the country, how can we attribute caste for the result. During 1952, when elections took place in the composite Madras State, there was a representation at that time against the Communist party. The undivided Communist party went underground and thousands of communist workers had been arrested. They went to the court during 1952. Again the Communist party gained the public sympathy and thereby most of the Congress people were defeated at